

## **Future Land Use Plan Community Input**

Drawing from past efforts to gather public input for plans, the planning staff realized that it is a challenge to generate sufficient interest in city-wide meetings on planning initiatives without citizens believing there is an immediate threat to their property or a “common enemy” to their neighborhood. In order to obtain more meaningful and comprehensive input, planners identified and presented to organized groups throughout the City such as homeowners’ and neighborhood associations, the Homebuilders Association, the Board of Realtors, the Chamber of Commerce, and various civic, historic, and environmental groups. In an unprecedented public outreach effort, including more than 80 public meetings, staff was able to provide opportunity for input for over 600 citizens. Over 15 different types of input techniques were utilized including brainstorming sessions, ranking the importance of various growth characteristics, ranking roadway corridor characteristics, opinion and visual preference surveys, and obtaining opinions on positive and negative changes in Wilmington from both long-term and new residents.

Input received so far indicates that citizens are generally satisfied with quality of life in Wilmington, but are concerned about the future. “Anyone who has been here for the last 20 years can tell you how much Wilmington has changed. We need to take a hard look at the City’s current planning challenges in order to see what needs to happen in the next 20 years,” says Clark.

The following issues emerged as the overarching themes derived from the public input:

- Promotion of the attractiveness of the community with landscaping and more aesthetically pleasing architecture
- Improvement of transportation systems including a reduction in traffic congestion, a reduction of driveways along arterials, and the provision of more sidewalks and bike paths.
- Visual preference surveys indicated a higher tolerance for development density if pleasing architectural design and abundant landscaping is utilized.